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SERIOUS REFLECTIONS
ADDRESSED TO ALL PARTIES
ON
The PRESENT STATE of AMERICAN AFFAIRS,
A
S E R M O N
PREACHED AT
CHESHUNT in HERTFORDSHIRE,
ON
THE FAST-DAY,
DECEMBER 13, 1776.
By S. W O R S L E Y.

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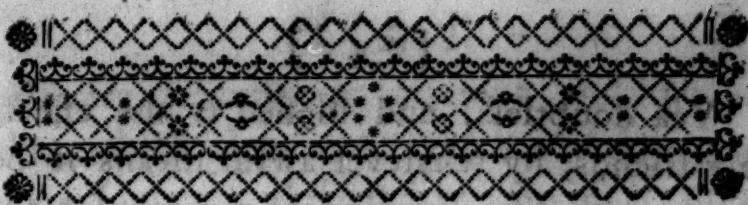
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ISAIAH xxvi. 9.

WHEN THY JUDGEMENTS ARE IN THE
EARTH, THE INHABITANTS OF THE
WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THEY *should* do so at least: it is
much to be desired and wished that
they did it universally: it is God's
gracious end and view on *all* such occa-
sions; and their tendency to produce this
effect is that which makes even his *judgements*
truly and properly testimonies of *kindness*,
and expressions of *love* to his creatures: it
must therefore be our prayer and concern
that at least this may be the case *with us*:
and it is the business of those upon whom
the office of public instructors is devolved to
labour as much as possible for promoting
and securing it.

Yea doubtless, and blessed is the effect, my friends, by whatever awful means it be produced! The learning of righteousness is the ensuring of happiness! and therefore, though we have certainly double reason for praise, when God is pleased to teach men this lesson by methods of mercy and compassion, yet, even when it is by terrors and judicial visitations that the same great and good end is brought about, we shall still in the issue, and upon the whole, have just cause for much thankfulness to him who ruleth in the earth. In this view of the subject I would engage *your* attention now to it, that it may prove through God's blessing both an effectual excitement to duty and a happy encouragement of our trust in him.

I know this is a very common text for a fast sermon: a text, which has often been chosen on such occasions heretofore; and which, I question not, will be preached upon by many ministers in this kingdom this day: but surely it would not have been already so commonly used on former fasts, nor so likely to be made great use of now, if it were not evidently and admirably adapted to the occasion. Let its striking force and suitableness therefore induce us
all

all very seriously to attempt and pursue that, which alone can make it useful or proper; I mean, the application of it upon right principles to ourselves. I am sensible it is in *this* that the fitness and excellence of a subject must consist, and to this my feeble endeavours shall be bent, while I beg leave to suggest to you a few reflections

First, Upon the awful judgements of God, which demand our attention: and,

Secondly, Upon that righteousness which we should learn from them: after which,

Thirdly, I will add a few inferences by way of application and improvement of the subject. May God by his good spirit assist us, that in consequence of what shall now be delivered in his name, whatever *others* do, *we* at least may (*every* one of us) be more and better disposed than ever to learn the important lesson of righteousness from his judgements.

First, The words, "thy judgements in the "earth" open to us a wide field of very awful and affecting contemplation, and their

meaning may be largely illustrated by facts. Here, if any ask, what those judgements of God are, to which I would be understood to refer, and which should always teach righteousness to mankind, whenever they are visited with them ? I must not omit first to say,

That *any* of his judgements, and even *all* of them without exception (as being *his* judgments) ought to produce this happy effect upon us ; but especially let me add,

That the calamities of *war* should do it ; and particularly

Those of *civil* commotion and confusion, contention and discord,

I. Though we must take a *somewhat confined* notice presently of those dreadful judgements of God, which do now especially call for our attention ; yet, that my subject may be thoroughly understood and suitably comprehended by us, I must begin with intreating you to fix it well in your minds, that *all* the divine judgements, of what nature and kind soever they may be, well deserve such a share as this which is here spoken of in the attention of all who are visited with, affected by, or even only witnesses of them, and that

that it is their being God's judgements which gives them a right and title to it.

We cannot enlarge our conceptions here too much ; and I would be far therefore from wishing to draw off your thoughts from *any* judgements which we ever see inflicted upon others, or feel the weight of ourselves : if, for example, it be in some other far distant parts of the earth that they are sent, so that we are not at all personally affected by them, yet we must not by any means confine our views to ourselves only, nor suffer our hearts to be unconcerned about what befalls any others of our fellow-creatures, or negligent of observing and improving it. But not to insist upon this, what I would particularly remark here is,

That we must lay it down as a first principle and maxim with us, that whatever judgements are in the earth, and by whatever means they are brought about, they are all of God's sending and appointing, all under his supreme direction and controul, and all *therefore* capable of the very useful application recommended in the text.

I grant indeed, it is an awful view that we take of God, when we consider him as a God of judgments ! there is much more pleasure, and not less justice and propriety

in regarding him as the father of mercies ;
but since

“ A God *all-mercy* would be a God unjust ;”
and since his own word, which is the truth,
has given him the solemn titles of a God to
whom vengeance belongs, *Pf. xciv. 1.* and
even of a consuming fire, *Heb. xii. ult.* to
all the workers of iniquity ; yea, for as much
as, if we were not to make his holiness and
justice equally familiar to our minds with his
love and mercy themselves, we must lose the
benefit of a very powerful (though painful)
motive, of which we may all (not except-
ing the best and the meekest of us) sometimes
stand in need to stir us up to obedience and
duty, or to guard us against the force of
some dangerous ensnaring temptations ; —
on all these accounts it is surely a very salu-
tary admonition, which I must not neglect
this opportunity of suggesting to you, that
all judgements, all punishments of sin, all
animadversions upon or chastisements of sin-
ners come from God. — so that if we speak
of any such events or circumstances, and
forget that *his* finger is in them, we are (to
say the least) out of the proper track for
gaining improvement by them.

This is true of *private*, awful, and af-
flictive dispensations of God's providence,
which

which affect us only in our persons, or in our immediate families and connections; but especially *Amos* iii. 6. "Shall there be evil in a *city* and the Lord hath not done it?" Shall *public* concerns, in which such vast numbers of his creatures are more or less deeply interested, be supposed to take their course unheeded by him? Shall *any* public calamities and judgements be imagined to fall out without his interposition and command?

In the present case, and in regard to our public national affairs at this juncture, let me here particularly intreat you to reflect, that while men are divided in their private opinions about second causes and instruments, it becomes us as much as possible to take off our attention from disputes that serve only to perplex and disturb and make uneasiness, and confine it down to a certain truth, in which we must *all* unite; which is, that God in his righteous anger, and for our manifold sins and transgressions, has suffered the judgements, which we now lament, to overtake us. I do not deny that it is an enquiry well-deserving of and very necessary for the notice of proper persons, and at proper times and places, "*who* were the instruments, and *who* the aggressors, &c." But, generally speaking,

ing, few persons in private stations are competent judges of these matters, and sure I am that we ought *all* of us at *all* times devoutly and seriously to eye God only as the first cause: whether for instance it be on *this* or on *the other* side of the Atlantic Ocean that any of *us* in particular may be inclined to think we see the first visible cause and foundation of our present broils—and whether the blame, or at least the chief blame, is to be laid in our view of things (which however by the way as being fallible should in either case be taken with humility and diffidence) *here* or *there*—I enter not into *that* enquiry—they are the *judgements of God* that have occasioned our coming together at this time, to abase ourselves before him, and that is sufficient for my purpose. If pestilence, if famine, if any other public national affliction had befallen us, we should have said so; and we must say it in this as well as in other cases: — Yea sorry, *very sorry* should I be that any of us should fail, for this *one* day at least, of regarding the threatening critical situation of our public affairs much more attentively in this light than in any other: for as a minister of the gospel of Christ, the gospel of peace and unity, I account it my business to

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keep

keep clear at least of whatsoever would foment uneasiness and division, and to assist as much as I can *all* of you (whatever be your particular sentiments concerning this matter) in joining alike to improve to religious purposes the present public distresses. It was in this view that I determined upon my text and subject; to give myself an opportunity of observing, for the general foundation of all that I have to recommend to your notice, that *any* judgements of God, when he sees fit to visit men with them, yea, that *all* such dispensations or events of providence, as (to do them, or rather to do ourselves justice) we are bound to regard in the solemn character of *his* judgements, are the occurrences to which my text refers. But having endeavoured so fully to establish, and so closely to apply this fundamental remark, let us proceed next to a little more particular discussion of the subject; and for this purpose, I must beg you to consider,

II. That especially *war* is a dreadful judgement of God upon any people. When nation rises against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and the report that daily sounds in our ears is that of wars and rumours of wars, *this* surely is, in itself considered, a
very

very heavy national affliction. Humanity, we know, prescribes universal peace, harmony and love; and christianity, we are well assured, enforces the command: and very great is the pity, that any men should be found having so little of the genuine spirit of either in them as to be at variance one among another; yea, terrible and shocking is the thought of multitudes of lives falling victims to their quarrels, and the blood of thousands being often spilt on both sides in maintaining and defending them. Oh! what numberless murders have the warriors of the earth, whom the false principles of history have been accustomed to place in so honourable and glorious a point of view,——what numberless murders must they have to answer for!

When God offered David three dreadful evils for his choice, on occasion of his having with great ostentation numbered the people whom he governed, he preferred even pestilence to war: and it is an emphatical description which is given us, *chap. xxi.* of this book of Isaiah, *ver. 15.* of the terror, with which it is calculated to inspire all who see it approaching, in these words—“They
 “ fled from the swords, from the drawn
 “ sword, and from the bent bow, and from
 the

“ the grievousness of war :” concerning which also another prophet in like manner thus exclaims, *Jer. iv. 19.* “ My bowels !
 “ my bowels ! I am pained at my very
 “ heart ! my heart maketh a noise in me,
 “ and I cannot hold my peace ! because thou
 “ hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the
 “ trumpet, and the alarm of war.”

I will only further observe for the illustration of this point, that two prophets have consented to represent it as ~~one~~ chief ingredient or support of the happiness of the last days, when the Redeemer's kingdom shall be fully established among men, that they
 “ shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
 “ and convert their spears into pruning-
 “ hooks, and nation shall not lift up a sword
 “ against nation, neither shall they learn the
 “ cruel art of war any more.”——Oh ! how long, Lord ? how long 'ere these great prophecies shall be accomplished ?—In the meanwhile our own feelings tell us, that the widow and the fatherless, whose husband and father have fallen in a field of battle, cannot fail of considering war as a most dreadful calamity, and that when the sorrows of individuals on such an account are joined together, it becomes a sore public and national evil : and
 above

above all most shocking to us *all* (though not ourselves immediately interested) is the reflection upon such numbers of our fellow-creatures, fellow-immortals, when their blood is shed in the heat and fury of the fight, being hurried into eternity!—but very few of them, comparatively speaking, (it is to be feared!) but *very* few of them in a state of preparation for it! The groans of the dying on a field of such carnage and slaughter! and the carcases of the dead strewed over, or piled up in heaps upon it!—the bloody frightful evidences of a merciless devastation spread far and wide!—make me shudder and tremble, while I only represent the scene of horror to my imagination! Especially when I consider, that all these poor wretches have rushed suddenly and inconsiderately upon judgement and eternity—surely these things should teach us all to stand in awe of that tremendous God, among whose judgements this is to be reckoned one of the chief!—— To be however a little more particular *still*, let us observe under this head once more,

III. That if war in general, and in itself considered, be thus dreadful, *civil* war is without all doubt the *most* dreadful species of it. On many accounts it must be so esteemed

ed by us all. As of all kinds of murder that respect individuals only suicide is the worst, so it must on the same principles and by parity of reason be in societies too: for any country suffers and bleeds more by *one* much *less* ghastly wound, which it may properly be said to have given itself, while the members of the same community fight one against another, than by even *many* in appearance *more* deep and dreadful stabs which it receives from a common enemy; that unanimity, which helps to support and heal in the latter case, being totally lost and destroyed in the former, the sources of remedy are stopped up, and the means of it precluded. Civil war strikes at the most tender ties by which societies are linked together; and makes a breach wide and formidable in proportion even to the strength of those endearing ties themselves: yea, it threatens a much more immediate and speedy ruin (if it cannot by some prudent happy measures be stopped in time) than any other like calamity would in the common course of things bring on.

The blessed Jesus, when he had occasion to vindicate himself against the shameful charge of a confederacy with devils, has drawn his proof from this very proposition, and in the
 clearest

clearest terms decided the case we are now considering, or rather has expressed himself so as to shew that there is no ground for a single doubt upon the head, for that all men must immediately be sensible, *Matt. xii. 25.* that “every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” The mischief that ensues, (if providence in awful vengeance suffers it to go on) is in various respects like a gangreen or mortification in the human frame of the most deadly nature, and most rapid progress: the different inhabitants of the same provinces or neighbourhoods, yea, the several branches of the same families (according to the part each of them may take in the fatal quarrel) are brought into dissention, jealousy, and discord by it; their districts or their houses are thrown into violent and exceedingly alarming commotions, and reduced to the most distressing state of confusion: law and order vanish before the rage of an intestine war, and whatsoever can make community happy falls an instant sacrifice to its invenomed fury.

These and a thousand other shocking evils in their train—more than I have words to
recount

recount—yea, more than the most gloomy imagination can paint, are all the genuine consequences of such disturbances in a state, *before* an appeal to the sword takes place : but alas ! they are no more than the beginning of sorrows, and when compared with what follows afterwards, even these are trifling circumstances of disorder and distress. When fellow-countrymen, and subjects of the same government, heated by furious angry passions, level the murderous blow each at his brother's life, every drop of blood that flows from either's veins leaves a stain behind it, which perhaps ages and centuries will never be able to wash out again. O, ye promoters and abettors of internal feuds and animosities, of national discontents and insurrections, ye that sap the foundations of a people's reciprocal union, what a tenfold aggravated guilt lies at *your* door ! What a tremendous account will *you* have to give at last !—for if in a political view one curse be of deeper and blacker die than another, *this* is the judgement and the curse heaviest and blackest of them all ; and which side soever in such contests gains the victory, it is dreadfully gained, it is dearly paid for indeed ; and all through *your* means !

Can I think of two armies, marshalled in battle array, both consisting of a vast number of persons, for whom nature, and all their former connections had woven the sacred bands of friendship and love, who are strongly united in one common interest, who are under the most inviolable obligations to embrace, protect, defend, and serve each other ; but now prepared (ah ! wo is the day !) for mutual destruction ? perhaps the nearest neighbors and most intimate friends aiming the pointed steel each at the other's breast ? Yea, possibly the branches of the same house (once unspeakably happy under one harmonious roof) the brothers of the same family (once knit together in cordial love) and even the father and his own son, the son of his wishes, prayers, and hopes, both engaged in the bitter quarrel, but unhappily on the two opposite sides of it ? Can I think of the fate of a few hours, while the horrible artillery of war is employed, alas ! with too, too sure a success ! making such near and dear relations as these each other's murderers ? while all that ever knew them, all their tenderest and most affectionate connections, the wives, the mothers, the sisters, the children, the friends of the respective parties, whom
providence

providence has thought proper to keep out of the way of the immediate scene of slaughter, are yet, with aching hearts, with weeping eyes, expecting tidings, which, whatever they may be, they dread to hear ! Can I think of these things and not bewail the far-spread and incurable misery ? Can I say to my soul “ this is the present fact among some of the subjects of that very government under which my lot is cast,” and not tremble ?

There is no occasion for any pains to be taken to set this sad picture forth in more sorrowful and affecting colors than those in which it will present itself to every feeling heart ! The consequences in every view are inexpressibly alarming ; and but to take a slight and general glance of them cannot fail of wounding every soul amongst us to the quick !—— O thou awful sovereign God ! who art the disposer of every event ! surely *this* is the most to be lamented and deprecated by us of all those judgements, which for the punishment of their sins thou bringest upon a guilty nation:—for let us not lose sight of the one great ruling thought, which I intreated you from the first to take along with you in your attention to the whole of what I am offering to your consideration,

which is, that whoever were the instruments of sowing the seeds of this discord and distress, whoever among men be chargeable with the guilt of bringing on this destruction and horror, still that God, who ruleth among men, is to be acknowledged in it all. And even by this as well as by any other of his judgments exercised in the earth,

Secondly, He expects us to learn righteousness. It is what we all *should* do, and what the sincere and humble, the wise and pious *will* do.

There is a hint in the next words to my text, that some of the profane and hardened sinners of mankind have by their conduct and temper of mind made it even *necessary* that judgements should be used with them for this purpose, because other more gentle means are ineffectual, and they will not be brought to consideration by them. "Let favor be shewn to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord."— But, waving this, let us rather enquire in what respects we should learn righteousness from God's judgements, endeavouring to gain an answer to this question particularly adapted

to the present occasion. And here I will first state to you the true nature of this righteousness in one of its most important fundamental characteristics, as represented in the words which I have just borrowed from the next verse,—it is beholding the majesty of the Lord : and then, because I would wish to make the description of our duty plain and easy, I will only add repentance, reformation, and suitable humble fervent prayer to God as requisite and indispensable branches of it.

I. Let the prophet be allowed to explain his own ideas, and the learning of righteousness must be understood to mean the contemplating, and being devoutly affected by the majesty of the Lord ! Righteousness in this connection signifies at large true religion and piety, a belief of the being and perfections of God, and a suitable regard to his providence and government, yea, a firm, happy, and influential persuasion that his service is not in vain, and shall not go unrewarded, because he gives these convincing (though dreadful) proofs of his judging in the earth. The verse before that in which my text stands, together with the former part of the same verse, thus delineate this temper and principles, “ In the way even of thy
B 3 judge-

judgements, O Lord, have we *waited* for thee; the desire of our souls is to *thy name*, and to the remembrance of *thee*: with my *soul* have I desired thee in the night; yea with my *spirit* within me will I seek thee early:" and this is often represented as the natural and proper consequence of afflictions when they answer their end upon those who are exercised with them; *Hof.* v. 15. "I will go (says God) and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence (of which more presently) and seek my face: in their affliction they *will* seek me early." *Psf.* lxxviii. 34. "When he slew them, *then* they sought him, and they returned and enquired early after God." *Psf.* lxxxiii. 16. "Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O Lord:" and (to add no more) *Rev.* xv. 4. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy? All nations shall come and worship before thee, *because* thy *judgements* are made manifest." And without doubt if we can feel even his judgements and the awful visitations of his chastening rod, and not be brought to a general serious sense of things by them, we must be hardened indeed! Let us behold his divine majesty then herein; let us bow with humble and adoring souls at the foot-

stool of his throne ; let us apply particularly our reflections upon his awful judgements for the establishing us in this becoming disposition and frame of mind, and acknowledge it especially to be written even in crimson characters on every field of the slain, that God is righteous in all his ways, and that the holy and wise supreme governor of the world, the judge of all the earth, is to be humbly submitted to when he corrects men for their iniquities and sins ! But this brings me to observe,

II. That reflection and repentance are essential branches of the righteousness, which we are to learn, and to which we should be awakened and roused by God's judgements. " In the day of adversity (says the wise man) consider"—and if we set ourselves in earnest to consider, wherefore it is that God contendeth thus with us, we shall find abundant cause for humiliation and abasement before him. The consideration of the general prevailing corruption and guilt of our *country*, should deeply affect us here : we should join those holy souls, who sigh and cry for all the abominations which are done in the midst of us : alas ! what great reason to lament the almost universal depravity !

what reason with shame and confusion to acknowledge that neither fearing God nor regarding man is become indeed a common character amongst us: that luxury, intemperance, idleness and all immorality, spread their baneful influences wider and wider daily; that blasphemy and common wanton swearing, in defiance of all sense and decency, is arrived at a most enormous pitch: that profaneness even to atheism is so fashionable among all ranks of people! — We should reflect upon and mourn for the sins of those in higher ranks, and of those in lower meaner stations: of the old, failing to set a good example before the young; and of the rising generation, running (tho' it is the headlong path to ruin) into all debaucheries and excesses: — for the sins of every day, and for those of the Lord's-day: the neglect of divine ordinances, the contempt of religious worship, the disregard to every thing that is serious, the addictedness to all manner of vice and iniquity, which abound and increase daily in our land. — Where shall I close the black catalogue? or rather to what a length might I easily run it out? for which of the personal, social, or divine virtues do we not see habitually trampled upon by all sorts and conditions of men, as
interest

interest may tempt them, or even often only as wicked modes and customs may lead the way?

We are not however to content ourselves with these general reflections: but must humble ourselves before God, every one of us for our *personal* transgressions also; and for the share which we have taken by them in increasing the national guilt: we should make immediate and close application of the general charge, bringing it home to our own hearts, and repenting sincerely of whatever we find to be amiss *in us*. Hereupon it follows of course,

III. That to learn righteousness is to learn reformation; which is strictly the righteousness here intended, and without which all pretences to penitence are incomplete and insincere. It is out of our power indeed as individuals to do much towards effecting a general universal reformation of manners, but we may each of us amend *one*: and particularly should it be the business of such a day as this to form the most stedfast holy resolutions of endeavouring so to do: for thus we find God reasoning with his people in the lviiith. chapter of this book of Isaiah: “Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for
for

for a man to afflict his soul!— Is it to bow down his head as a broken bulrush * ? and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call *this* a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? — Is not *this* the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness? &c.—*then* shall thy light break forth as the morning, ver. 8. and thy health shall spring forth speedily!”

This was the conduct of the Ninevites, *Jonah* iii. ult. they turned from their evil ways—and the consequence was, that God also laid aside his fierce anger:—Thus surely we may, any of us, in the most private station, do our country singular and seasonable service in this peculiarly critical and important juncture:—we may look into our own hearts and lives, and see what is amiss *there*, and by the help of God set about the amendment of it, and so contribute *our proportion* to a universal reformation of manners, that iniquity may not be our ruin. Once more,

* Several critics have observed, that there is hardly any plant more erect and stately, than a bulrush in it's natural growth: it seems therefore that either the word must mean (as one of them renders it) a *rush*, not a *reed*; or else the allusion must be to a bulrush in it's humbled broken state, when the wind has bowed it down and bent it.

IV. The offering up of suitable humble fervent prayers to GOD, is another indispensable and requisite branch of righteousness, to which we should undoubtedly be excited by the observation and suffering of his judgments: *ver.* 16. " Lord, in trouble have
 " they visited *thee*: they poured out a pray-
 " er when thy chastening was upon them:"
 and so *Jer.* ii. 27. " in the time of their
 " trouble they will say, arise and save us."

Particularly it is very obvious here, that our prayers to GOD should be of such a nature, and for such blessings as the present occasion and pressing necessity suggests the importance of! We should pray both for our native country, and for our American Colonies, that the affliction, as it is indeed a grievous one to both, may be sanctified to them and to us, and good brought out of this exceedingly great evil. We should pray for the pardon of all public sins and transgressions, both theirs and ours; for the pouring down of a spirit of reformation to assist us and all concerned; and for a happy termination of the present dreadful disputes, with all their unnatural and shocking consequences.

His Majesty, in his royal proclamation on this important and solemn occasion, has very
 wisely

wisely and kindly led all our thoughts ultimately to peace, as the great blessing we should pray for;—"the peace, safety and prosperity of himself and all his dominions:"—O! that it might be brought about and established without the shedding even of a single drop more of human blood in the quarrel:—*Thus* do thou, if it be thy gracious will, good Lord, *thus* do thou be pleased to give peace in this our day, and continue it to our posterity.—We must not only abhor the thought of putting our *trust* in chariots and horses, and other warlike preparations and instruments of terrible efficacy and execution, (which would be to thirst with savage cruelty for blood) but O! that there might be *no* occasion *any* further,—*any* longer to have recourse to such measures at all! Our hearts bleed at the thought of them!—O God of Britain (should we say) let the sword be returned into its sheath, and for that glorious purpose appear thou seasonably in this critical period for the mother country and her colonies, and re-establish a happy union between them, restoring and perpetuating their mutual peace and harmony.

For the king in particular, and all in authority, and all who have any share in the
direction

direction and management of public affairs ; we are to pray that they may themselves be directed to the most proper methods for attaining this great and good end ; and for all concerned, that their minds may be most happily influenced to fall in with and promote the success of those methods : that so confusion may cease, discord and the alarms of war may be exchanged for love and a good understanding and intercourse, lawful authority and good government may be restored in the distracted provinces, commerce may no longer, in any of the branches of it, suffer or be put at all to a stand, but tranquillity and joy may yet again reign throughout the whole British Empire. In fine, we are to pray that the delusions and infatuations, which have been the occasion of this lamentable breach, may all be rectified and cured, and it may be immediately and effectually — yes, through God's blessing; even *immediately* and *effectually* repaired and healed.

These are prayers, in which I think persons of all parties amongst us, must heartily join, whatever be their particular sentiments concerning the merits of the unhappy dispute now in agitation. And now,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, for the close and improvement of my subject, if these branches or evidences of a truly righteous spirit, a pious sense of God and his providence, together with repentance, amendment, and prayer, be the natural effects of a due consideration of God's judgements, we are plainly instructed what application to make on such occasions; to wit, by recollecting

I. with grief and sorrow of heart, how sadly former dispensations of providence, and even former awful judgements of God in the earth, have failed of answering this their gracious and wise end upon us: again, by reminding ourselves

II. That, whatever others may do, it is at least *our* duty to strive, each of us in our stations, to set all around us an example of making such an improvement of the present visitation: and moreover by comforting ourselves too

III. That since the words of my text are a promise, we may reasonably rejoice in them as such, and should fervently pray to have that gracious promise now universally made good amongst us; all concerned in or affected by these awful judgements, which we
have

have been speaking of, being for that purpose suitably and divinely assisted and directed! These hints seem to need no enlargement.—I will only add,

IV. That we should be exceedingly thankful (with all humble conviction of our dependence upon God's good providence for it) that it is not judgement alone that we have occasion to meditate upon, but that in the midst of it he remembers mercy: for instance, our having so many long-forfeited blessings, both civil and religious, continued to us! what a momentous proof of divine forbearance is this! our having been indulged with so favourable a season, so plentiful a harvest *this* year in particular! our not being actually involved in (however threatened with) a foreign war with our European neighbours, at the same time with this internal disturbance! and the unhallowed flames of civil confusion, and bloodshed, as the consequence of it, not having been suffered to extend their mischievous and dreadful ravages *here*, and to make our own land the immediate seat of war and desolation!——Surely when the judgements of God are only *in the earth* at a distance from us,

us, and not amongst us, it is an especially important part of the righteousness to be learnt from them, (though it would not have come in so properly before) that we should labour to be, in some happy proportion to our obligations, diligent and thankful: and while all parties unite in the prayers which I have just now been recommending to you, they should all in like manner join in these praises too:—Finally, *if there be any* prospect at all of a reconciliation, and a happy issue of this event of providence coming on, how thankful should *this* make us! at least with very grateful pleasure should we reflect that our governors, and those whom they employ, with all their steadfastness, are so mild likewise, have treated the colonies with so much lenity, are so averse to sanguinary measures, and so well inclined to peace, if it may but with consistency and honour be brought about.—I only repeat this once more,—with one voice, with one heart let us pray to the God of peace, **THAT IT MAY TAKE EFFECT!**—And to enforce this exhortation, the words of the Psalmist shall conclude my discourse, *Psf. cxxii. 6. &c.*

“ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper

prosper that love thee: peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces: for my brethren and companions sakes, I will now say, peace be within thee: because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good."

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Having seen printed copies of this excellent hymn on different occasions, and with variations, it seems not necessary to name it's author, who it is hoped will forgive the little liberties here taken with one or two expressions in it. I could have wished that the person, who sent it to the London Chronicle, on Saturday December 14, 1776, had acknowledged it not to be his own, as the late Rev. Dr. Allen did, when he published it at the end of his Fast-Sermon in 1756.

H Y M N.

WHEN Abram fill'd with holy fear
Before Jehovah stood,
And with a humble fervent pray'r
For guilty Sodom sued,

With what success, what wondrous grace
Was his petition crown'd !
The Lord would spare, if in the place
Ten righteous men were found !

And could a single holy soul
So great a favour gain ?
Good God, and shall a nation cry,
And plead with thee in vain ?

Great Britain, guilty as she is,
Has yet some saints, we trust :
See, their united pray'rs ascend,
And shall those pray'rs be lost ?

Are not the righteous dear to thee
Now as in ancient times ?
Or does this sinful land exceed
Gomorrah in it's crimes ?

Dread Lord, let not thine anger burn,
If we thy suppliants bow,
And say, " till thou vouchsafe thy grace
" We will not let thee go."

O may our people, priests and king
Thy saving mercy share,
And know thee by thy glorious name,
" The God that heareth pray'r."

F I N I S.

1831

Great Britain, gather as the is,
Thy yet some fainter, we trust;
And their united pray is ascend,
And their united pray is be lost?

Are not the righteous their to this

Now as in ancient times?

Or does this faithful land extend

God's wrath in its crimes?

Dead Lord, let our time and pain

It we thy people's bow

And thy "will thou vouchsafe thy Grace

"We will not let thee go."

O may our people, priests and king

Thy saving mercy bring

And know thee by thy glorious name

"The God that heareth prayer"

1831